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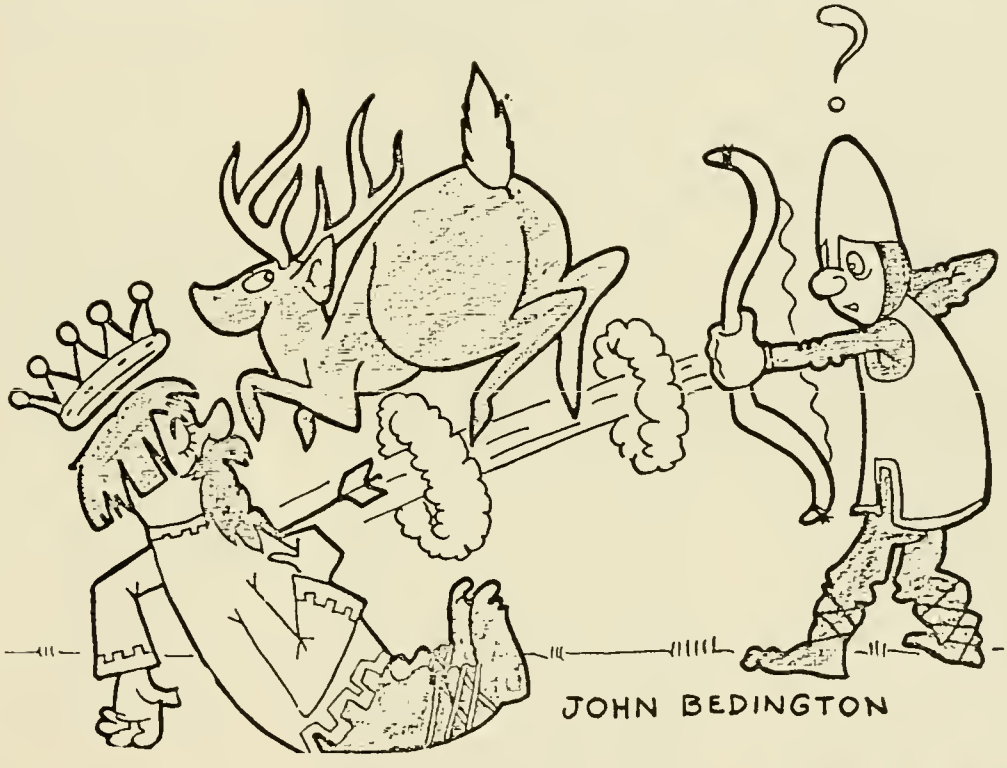

ABOUT HUNTING

Accidents

Wherever there's talk of hunting, conversation usually includes accidents, or near accidents. It's popular to chide the irresponsibility of today's hunter, but fact is that hunting accidents date back through history, and probably plagued even the first user of weapons. D. N. Omand wrote in the Ontario Fish and Wildlife publication of some classical examples of hunting accidents.

"One of the most popular folk-singing groups of the day has, in its repertoire, a ballad which relates the sad fate of a young woman named Polly Von. It seems that Polly wandered down to the shore of a nearby lake at dusk one evening. One of her admirers was prowling about in the bushes, armed with bow and arrows, hunting swans. A flash of Polly's white apron caught his eye and a well aimed arrow dispatched her on the spot. "Oh and alas," he laments, "She'd had her apron wrapped about her and I took her for a swan."

If this has a familiar ring to it, it's because something similar happens with depressing frequency. Dusk, a sudden movement, a case of wrong identification—and we have all the ingredients of a hunting accident. Hunting accidents are not necessarily the concomitants of high powered firearms and crowded conditions.

Consider, for instance, the fate of the Apostle St. Thomas. In his book of Travels, Marco Polo relates that the holy man met his death and was buried in a small

city south of Madras where he had retired to a monastery. At the time, the countryside thereabouts abounded with peacocks. One day, the Saint was engaged in prayer, surrounded by a number of these brightly plumaged birds. An idolater of the tribe of the Gavi, out on a hunting expedition, failed to see the Apostle among the quarry and loosed an arrow in their general direction. His marksmanship was unfortunately not as good as that of young Polly's lover for he missed his mark and fatally wounded St. Thomas. The spot where he died became a center of pilgrimage for Christians and Saracens alike.

Presuming that the holy man was wearing some sombre garb consistent with a monastic way of life, it is easy to imagine how the huntsman failed to see him. Again, the whole story sounds vaguely familiar. A missed shot, an unseen person in the background—and another statistic.

Another case in point is that of William II of England, remembered in our school history books as William Rufus. William was less than orthodox in his Christianity and consistently plundered the lands of the church. As a result, the ecclesiastical chronicles of his time have given him as the type specimen of a bad king. Thus he appears in the school histories; at least, he did when I went to school. Later historians have decided that, aside from his unfortunate bias against the church, he was a brilliant soldier, a fine administrator and a man of his word.

In any case, he was a keen hunter and went out in the New Forest on August 2nd, 1100. It is generally concluded that one of his favorites, Walter Tirel, loosed an arrow at a stag, missed his aim and killed the king. As one of the early chronicles puts it: "On the morrow after Lammas Day was the King William in hunting from his own men with an arrow offshot." There have been many elaborations of this stark statement. Walter Tirel promptly fled to France from which point of safety he protested his innocence. No one will ever know whether this was truly a hunting accident for many people profited by William's death, among them brother Henry who succeeded him, the mediaeval church which was relieved of an oppressive rule, and an over-taxed country.

Many versions of the story indicate that William was the victim of a ricochet. The arrow glanced a nearby tree before it hit him. Again, a familiar situation.

Hunting accidents were common in Greek mythology although, in many cases, they could not properly be described as accidents. Artemis, sister of Apollo, was a keen huntress and is usually pictured with a silver bow. She found it convenient to dispose of those who displeased her by turning them into game animals, bears, stags and so forth, and hunting them down.

Peleus, son of Aeacus, accidentally killed the son of his host with a boar spear while hunting the Calydonian boar, presumably a fairly short range accident.

A careless moment, a shot at something not clearly seen, a ricochet—and the victim is just as dead, whether felled by a rock, club, spear, arrow or bullet."

More sophisticated weapons used by hunters now make firearm accidents more dramatic, and probably more frequent. Hunting accidents, however, seem to get more publicity than their frequency warrants. For example, a summary of accidents for the year of 1962 demonstrated one hunting accident for every 15,283 hunters. Total accident statistics for the year of 1962 (that year is exemplified because statistics are readily available) show accidental deaths as follows:

Motor Vehicle	40,900	or 52.2	per	100,000 population
Falls	19,800	or 10.7	"	" "
Fires, burns, etc.	7,500	or 4.0	"	" "
Drowning	6,400	or 3.4	"	" "
Railroad accidents	2,200	or 1.2	"	" "
Firearms	2,000	or 1.1	"	" "
Poison, solid & liquid	1,700	or 0.9	"	" "
Poisoned gasses	1,400	or 0.8	"	" "
All other	16,300	or 8.8	"	" "

From the period of May 1, 1967 through April 30 of 1968, the Montana Fish and Game Department received reports on 15 hunting accidents involving firearms. There were more gun accidents, but we're only considering here the ones which were related to hunting. In 10, rifles were involved, in four shotguns were involved, and in one a handgun was involved. Six were fatal and nine were not. Nine of the accidents, including four fatalities, resulted from unintentional discharge of a gun. In three of the unintentional discharge accidents, hunters fell with cocked guns. One gun discharged when the hammer became caught on brush, one discharged as it was being removed from a vehicle muzzle first, a second discharged as it was being removed from an automobile. One weapon fell from an insecure rest, and one victim was using a loaded shotgun as a prybar. Cause of one accidental discharge was unknown.

On the intentional discharge side of the ledger, in instances when the firearms were intentionally fired, there were six accidents including two fatalities. In three cases, including two fatalities, the victims were mistaken for game. The cause of one accident remains unknown, another stepped in front of a hunter who was firing, and another was struck by a ricochet.

Among the intentional discharge accidents, mistaking a person or a vehicle for an animal is seemingly inexcusable. The question as to how one person could conceivably mistake his fellow man for a deer or elk has long been pondered, and has been passed off as "carelessness." Science is probably getting close to knowing the real reason why and it seems that there's considerably more to be coped with than mere carelessness.

Probings into the mind as a result of research on psychedelic drugs may have unearther the key to many hunting accidents.

Scientists tell us that stored away in our minds like frames on a movie film are images and thoughts which under normal cir-

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Edited by VERNON CRAIG

cumstances are never experienced. Like batteries of primed cannons they sit harmless but with great potential. Some drugs, LSD for example, may trigger these cannons and pent up images are released upon the mind in an awesome flood of hallucinations.

Consider the hunter now who has been looking forward for weeks, perhaps months to stalking the mountains for deer. As he prowls the forest he carries in his subconscious an image of a big deer or elk—a suppressed hallucination. Some identifying object, or perhaps a sound, may trigger the image upon the conscious mind. A flash of white, or brown, or perhaps even a sound may make the hunter see a deer where in fact a man stands.

Frank Woolner of Massachusetts has written on these or similar hallucinations that have caused hunting accidents. He calls it "Early Blue." The name refers to an experiment where observers watched blurred pictures gradually brought into focus and were asked to identify the pictures as soon as they though them recognizable. At middling focus, 75 percent of the answers were wrong.

Dr. Leonard Mead, professor of psychology at Tufts University has also contemplated the ability of persons to see deer where there were none, and even thought it possible for a person to conjure up the image of a deer out of the play of light and shadow. He also suggested that it would be logical to assume that the illusion could be blocked or dispelled by something unnatural, such as an unusual color. This bears out the prudence of state laws requiring big game hunters to wear some bright color.

There's much to be said about color itself, however, All colors except red turn to shades of gray as the light dims before they turn to black. Red has no "achromatic" or gray interval and changes abruptly to black. The development of "flourescent" or "irridescent" colors which have great powers to gather and reflect light have done much to make color more brilliant and recognizable even in dim light. Some states have adopted laws requiring that the irridescent color "blaze orange" be required on garments of hunters. Blaze orange, it is argued, is one color which cannot be found in nature and therefore instead of acting as a trigger for an illusion will produce the opposite effect.

GAME ANIMALS MUST BE PROPERLY TAGGED IMMEDIATELY AFTER KILL!

Write Your Name, Address, County of Kill

Punch Out Dates — Attach the Tag

UNTAGGED OR IMPROPERLY TAGGED GAME ANIMALS MUST BE CONFISCATED.

Other suggestions to help hunters from falling into the trap of mistaking a man for game are firstly: recognize the fact that even you, regardless of your hunting experience or acuteness of vision, could fall victim to an allusion. Recognition of this fact should cause each hunter to take a second or third look before pulling that trigger. Secondly, look over your intended target with binoculars. This not only helps to better identify a target, but gives a little more time to make sure that the mind isn't playing tricks. An English hunter, Mark Beaufoy, many years ago wrote the following poem for his son. The poem might still serve as criteria for a careful hunter.

A Father's Advice to His Son

If a sportsman true you'd be,
Listen carefull to me:

When a hedge or fence you cross,
Though of time it cause a loss,
From your gun the cartridge take
For the greater safety sake.

If 'twixt you and neighbouring gun
Bird may fly or beast may run,
Let this maxim e'er be thine:
"Follow not across the line."

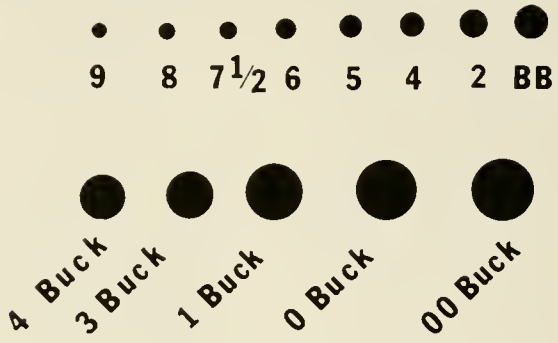
Stops and beaters, oft unseen,
Lurk behind some leafy screen;
Calm and steady always be:
"Never shoot where you can't see."

Keep your place and silent be,
Game can hear and game can see;
Don't be greedy, better spared

Is a pheasant, than one shared.

You may kill, or you may miss,
But at all times think of this—
"All the pheasants ever bred
Won't repay for one man
dead."

Shotgun Bore Sizes



Shot Sizes

The Gun

Shooters are often confused by vernacular of gun buffs. Consequently, there's sometimes a question as to which gun can best do the job. On this point, one can get endless argument. Just about all will agree, though, that **most important** is for the hunter to know his gun, regardless of its caliber or gauge. A hunter must be completely familiar with his gun for safety purposes, as well as for understanding its killing power.

The person buying his first gun may be confused between **caliber** and **gauge.** Rifles and pistols are rated by caliber for their bore diameter. For example, the small bore, popular varmit gun is .22 caliber. Popular calibers for deer guns in Montana are .30-30, .270, and .30'06. There are no caliber restrictions on big game guns in Montana, but the bulk of big game guns will range in the .270 and .30'06 class.

Shotgun bore size is rated in gauge. Gauge was first determined by the number of lead balls the diameter of the bore which would weigh a pound. For example, if a lead ball which fit snugly into a shotgun bore weighed 1/8 of a pound, then it was an 8 gauge. Beginning with the smallest, popular shotgun gauges are: .410, 28, 20, 16, 12, and 10 gauge. The .410 is actually caliber, since it is a measure of the bore diameter. Both smaller and larger gauges were once manufactured, but federal waterfowl regulations and most state regulations now prohibit hunting with shotguns larger than 10 gauge. Probably the most popular gauges presently used are 20 and 12 gauges.

Shotgun barrels are modified to either allow the rapid spread of shot, as it leaves the barrell, or to hold the shot closer together. The rapidity of spread of shot as it leaves the barrell is called the shot pattern. This spread of shot is what makes it possible to hit rapidly moving targets. Modification of barrels to control the spreading is known as "choke." A full choke barrel holds the shot together for long range shooting. On the opposite end of the scale, the open or cylinder choke allows maximum spread of shot for close range hunting. The modified choke is sort of a compromise between these two extremes.

The size of the shot in a shotgun shell must be considered when one is purchasing ammunition. Popular sizes range from a number 9 (small) to the large 00 Buck. When determining shot size, the hunter will want as many shot in the pattern as possible, but shot must be large enough for penetration and for the required range. Recommended size for rabbits and small game birds usually begins with number six and ends with number eight for quail and grouse. The in-between size, 7½ is popular for trap shooting. Since waterfowl hunters generally have longer range shots, a number four shot is most popular among duck hunters and number two for long range goose shooting. When shotguns are used for deer hunting, state law requires 0 Buck, 00 Buck, or single ball loads.

Development of Guns and Ammunition

Development of ammunition and firearms from crude cannon to the sophisticated rifles of today's hunter has been a long process of research and experimentation. Rex Smart of the Montana Fish and Game Department, in an article "Rocks to Rockets" tells of the development of powder, firearms, and cartridges. Following is a portion of the article:

Explosive powder was apparently first known in China but was mostly used for noise-makers and fireworks. It was not until the 13th century that it was discovered in Europe. For the next 500 years, black powder consisting of equal parts of saltpeter, sulphur and charcoal ground to the consistency of fine coal dust was the activating force in weaponry. This form of powder was usually called surpentine. The sulphur furnished the heat, the saltpeter furnished oxygen and the charcoal provided gas volume. In this combination, black powder burned very rapidly. The explosion actually followed the bullet only a short way down the barrell giving poor ballistics. A great deal of energy was lost by gas escaping around the large round ball. Being very fine and soft, surpentine had a tendency to absorb moisture and explode poorly if it was tamped too hard. Coupled with the fact that this type of black powder left a lot of sooty residue in the bore, it was considered far from ideal and the search continued for better components.

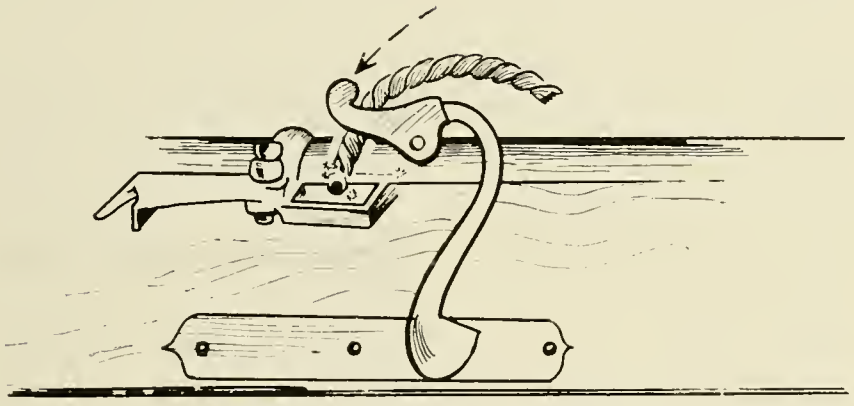
At this time, manufacturers were finding that more pure ingredients produced a better product. Also, it was found that by varying grain size, it was possible to vary the burning rate. A ratio of 15 parts charcoal, 10 parts sulphur and 75 parts saltpeter (by weight) became the new standard. This formula, I think, would be

close to present manufacture. Thus, black powder became a much more reliable propellant, but it still had defects. It gave off large quantities of smoke and flame that instantly revealed a man's postion in battle. Its power was still relatively low and it left a heavy deposit to foul the barrel.

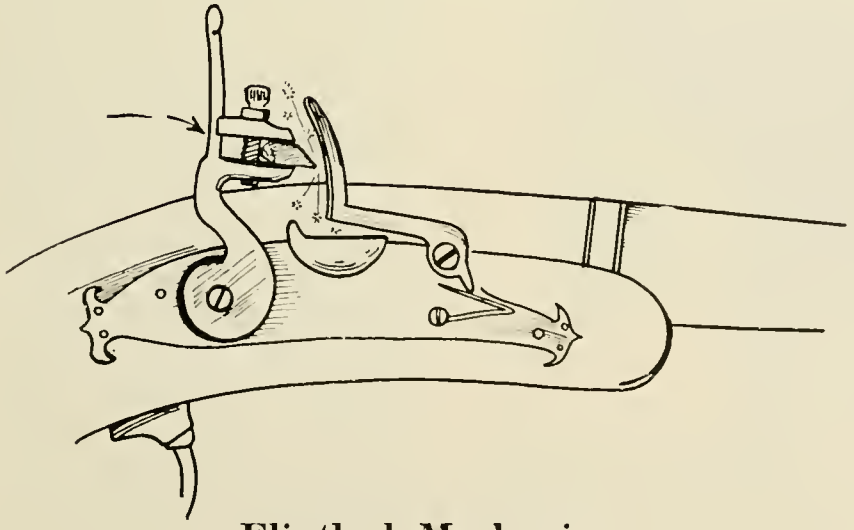
In 1845, gun cotton was discovered in Switzerland. It was a powerful explosive and a great deal of time and effort was spent trying to adapt it as a propellant for small arms. This testing proved unsuccessful, however, for the new product was unstable. It was not until about 1885 that the French Government found that by dissolving gun cotton with ether, it could be dried, formed into flakes and safely used as a propellant. About the same time, in Italy, it was discovered that by treating glycerin with sulphuric and nitric acid a very high explosive was produced.

Nitroglycerin, as this mixture was called, was found to be far too potent for a propellant. Some time later in England, the problem was solved by mixing gun cotton and nitroglycerin into a gelatinous substance. When dried and formed into tiny cubes and cylinders this produced a suitable propellant. These two materials then became known as single and double base smokeless powder and with minor improvements are the same as used today.

This new substance, unlike black powder, burned only on the outside. As gas pressure developed, the bullet would start to move in the barrell and continued to pick up speed as gas volume increases. There was little or no smoke with this new powder. Cleaning after every few shots was also eliminated. Velocity was greatly increased. A new era of arms and ammunition had begun.



Matchlock Mechanism



Flintlock Mechanism

Guns arrived with the discovery of black powder. First came the hand cannon which was little more than a pipe into which powder and ball were placed. A small hole in the top rear was known as the touch hole. The cannon was fired by passing a red-hot wire through this hole into the powder charge.

Soon the touch hole on the hand cannon was moved from the top to the side and a small pan added directly underneath. A small amount of powder was poured in this pan and ignited by using a pair of tongs to drop in a red-hot coal.

After the addition of the pan, the next important development was the match lock in the early 1400's. This was accomplished by adding an S-shaped piece pivoted in the center and holding linen or hemp cord that burned very slowly. The shooter merely lowered this red-hot cord to the flash pan by moving the rod with his fingers. This was a very important development. Man no longer needed to be near a fire to shoot and also his right hand gave him more support for aiming. Thus the match lock gun taking on the shape of the guns to follow could probably be given the distinction of being the father of present day firearms. This gun was the standard arm in Europe with no major changes until about 1600 when it was given a trigger and a sear as we know it. Even though the old gun had its faults, such as having to adjust the burning cord and having it put out at times by rain, this arm was a favorite for many years.

The wheel lock was next in the parade and differed from the match lock by having a rough edged wheel fastened to the side of the lock and protruding through the pan. This wheel was wound against a main spring with a special key or spanner and when released turned against a piece of pyrite to throw sparks much as a cigarette lighter does today. This type was used for some time with success, but actually never did replace the match lock as a military arm.

The next ignition system was

known as the Flintlock. There were several versions of this such as the Snaphaunce, Miguelet, English lock or Dog lock and others. These, I believe, were stepping stones for the true Flintlock developed in France in the early 1600's. It had features of all the others and was a safe, simple arm. The action of the hammer holding a flint in its jaws struck the steel and opened the pan cover at the same time so that a spark might fall in the flash pan. To this was also added a stronger sear that allowed for a full cock or a safety half cock. This new system met with some opposition at first but by 1700 it was almost universally accepted.

The Coming of Percussion Detonation

In 1807, Alexander Forsyth patented a new detonating compound composed of either fulminate of mercury or potassium chlorate. This would explode when struck by a hammer. This soon revolutionized ignition. There were no more free sparks and weather had very little effect. Mr. Forsyth brought out the first of these new systems known as the pill lock. To use this new device, a tiny pellet of the new compound was placed in the pan and when struck by the hammer produced enough fire to set off the main powder charge in the gun barrel.

The tube lock of 1816, developed in England, was just what the name indicates—a tiny tube filled with fulminate. This little tube when crushed by the hammer would ignite the main charge.

The percussion cap required the removal of the flash pan and the flash hole was again moved to the top of the barrel and fitted with a small iron tuble called a nipple. The caps were known as Hi-hat musket caps, being shaped about like the old top hat of that day. These tiny cups were first made of iron and were not too successful. Next a pewter cap was tried with even worse results. Finally, in 1817, after a year of experimentation, a musket cap made from copper was found to be most successful. Copper caps were easy to form and were completed by putting a small drop of fulminate in the cavity covering it with tin foil and sealing with a drop of shellac. The caps used today are still made very nearly like this.

The sportsmen were quick to see the advantages of the percussion cap. Military men, however, were slower to be convinced and about 25 years were spent before it was accepted by the Army to replace the Flintlock. Thus developed the forerunners of modern firearms and ammunition.

Elk Management

By Howard Chrest

While big game hunting in the Gravelly-Snowcrest Mountains of southwestern Montana, persons can also enjoy some excellent mountain grouse hunting, trout fishing, photography, or just being out in the mountains surrounded by the beautiful scenery during the crisp, clear, fall weather. Generally, the hunter is only concerned about elk during the hunting season, but the Montana Fish and Game Department studies elk during all four seasons of the year. Most of their emphasis is placed on fall, winter, and spring seasons.

During the fall, principal concern is given to collection of information pertaining to general hunter success and welfare of the animals harvested. Spring is the season when the condition of the winter range is evaluated and recommendations for the next fall hunt are determined. When snow begins to deepen in the high country and food is unavailable, elk and other big game animals move to the lower areas commonly referred to as "winter ranges." In these locations, elk must have a readily available supply of food in order to survive. Since these winter ranges have a limited supply of food, good management practices are needed to maintain a balance of elk and their food. Some important areas for elk wintering in the Gravelly-Snowcrests are: Madison River at the Wall Creek Game Range, Ruby River near the Vigilante Ranger Station, Greenhorn Mountains, Ledford Creek area, parts of the Centennial and upper Blacktail Creek. Other places also support small groups of elk during the winter. In certain areas, elk and livestock industries conflict. An area of this nature which was a problem was west of the Madison River about 26 miles south of Ennis. An agreement with the landowner was worked out and the land was purchased for big game winter range and fishing access. The area is the Wall Creek Game Range and its purchase allowed more elk to winter in the Madison drainage. Hunting of game birds, camping

and other recreation uses are also provided for the public.

Madison county receives an annual payment from the Fish and Game Department in lieu of taxes for this land. This payment is based on taxes assessed on similar lands in the county. When the state legislature adopted provisions of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act in 1941, the states could receive federal matching funds on a three to one dollar basis. This money is used for land acquisition and other game management programs.

To the average elk hunter, the climax of the hunt is to shoot an elk. This is also an important consideration for the Montana Fish and Game Department, but the department must consider first the factors which bring an elk to maturity. The food supply of the elk is the very most important consideration from this standpoint. It is poor management to have more elk or any animal on a winter range than the range can support without being damaged. Not only is the reproduction and general condition of elk poor when they are too numerous, but the food they eat is grazed so short that the plants are unable to respond enough to get maximum production in the following years.

Let's take a look at sketches of the past history of the elk bag limits and hunting seasons in the Gravelly-Snowcrest Mountains. In 1903, hunters in Montana could hunt elk for two months and the bag limit was two bulls per hunter. Two years later, the hunter was allowed one elk of either sex. In 1915-1918, the season was for two and one-half months with one elk per hunter bag limit. By 1932, the season was shortened to one month. The Gravely-Snowcrests were a part of an area which was closed to elk hunting during the late 1930's and in the 1940's there was very little elk hunting allowed there.

In 1956 the season for elk in the Gravelly-Snowcrests was for either-sex hunting with no scheduled closing date. The season was closed in seven days. From 1957-1967 the seasons for the Gravelly-Snowcrests are shown in the following table:

1957 7 days either sex
1958 Antlered bulls only
1959 3 weeks bulls; 2 days either sex
1960 3 weeks bulls; 2 days either sex
1961 3 weeks bulls; 2 days either sex
1962 3 days either sex; 4 weeks bulls
1963 Antlered bulls, 5 weeks
1964 Antlered bulls, 5 weeks
1965 Branched antlered bulls, 5 weeks
1966 Antlered bulls, 5 weeks
1967 Antlered bulls, 125 either sex permits, 4 weeks

Either sex seasons were scheduled either at the beginning or at the end of the regular season. In either instance more than adequate harvest was obtained. The last year in which an open either-sex season was allowed (1962) over 5,000 hunters participated in the hunt. Many hunters used four-wheel drive vehicles and excellent weather conditions prevailed. Access was almost unlimited. All of these factors contributed to the high hunter success. The harvest of elk from 1959-1962 was sufficient to warrant closure of the season to either-sex hunting until 1967.

Elk reproduction in the Gravelly-Snowcrest Mountains is excellent with a ratio of 60-70 calves per 100 cows. On excellent winter range, this response can be expected and the number of elk bounced back up to the high numbers of the early 1960's. To keep the winter ranges in excellent condition, the Fish and Game Department in 1967 wanted to start leveling off the number of elk in the Gravelly-Snowcrests. It was recognized that a general season for either-sex elk hunting was not the answer to achieve a controlled maximum sustained annual yield in this particular area. Therefore, in 1967, a limited number of either-sex elk permits were issued. Using this method, the desired number of elk can be harvested annually in an orderly manner. The Gravelly-Snowcrest-Centennial big game management unit (former area 33) was divided into four units to allow manipulation of seasons and of harvest on different areas. Trapping and tagging of elk is a part of the program which furnishes data to outline area boundaries.

The future of elk management in the Gravelly-Snowcrests will depend upon good sound management practices. These practices are the obligation of the Fish and Game Department and of public land administrators. The sportsmen can assist in all game management by keeping informed of game management practices and cooperating with private landowners.

SNOWY MOUNTAIN DEER

By Neil Martin

The Snowy Mountains of Central Montana have long been noted among hunters for their excellent mule deer and whitetailed deer numbers. In 1966, the Snowies contributed approximately 5 percent of the annual statewide deer harvest and over 11 percent of the statewide har-

vest of whitetailed deer. Since 1961, the Snowy Mountains have been the leading whitetailed deer hunting district in the state, in terms of annual harvest. Although proportions of mule deer and whitetailed deer in the harvest have varied, whitetails have generally increased from approximately 35 percent of the 1960 harvest to 71 percent in 1967.

Despite its importance, little information concerning deer and their requirements is available in this area. The lack of knowledge regarding the relationship between whitetailed deer and mule deer sharing the same general habitat has hindered establishment of sound, effective management programs. As a result, a research project comprising about 150 square miles on the north slopes of the Snowy Mountains was initiated in 1967. Objectives were to describe the vegetation, determine the distribution of each species of deer, and examine their food habits. Research was begun in the summer of 1967 by George Kamps, a graduate student from Montana State University and will continue during the summer of 1968 and the winter of 1968-69.

The study area has been divided into four main vegetative types with vehicle observation routes established through each type. Regular, systematic observations along these routes provide information on seasonal distribution, movements, population trends, and use of vegetative types. An effort has been made to trap, tag, and individually mark sufficient numbers of deer to provide additional data on seasonal distribution, movements and harvest. Information regarding food habits is determined by examining deer feeding sites and recording the numbers and kinds of plants eaten. Additional food habits data will be obtained by examining the contents of rumens taken from two whitetails and two mule deer collected each month for 12 months.

Upon completion of the project, information on reproduction between species and areas, and the differences or similarities in range and forage use by each species should be known. The seasonal use of forage classes (forbs, browse, grass), the use of individual plant species, and the relationship of deer to land use practices will be determined. This will provide management personnel with information needed to establish sound management programs for the Snowy Mountains and other important central Montana deer ranges, and possibly other parts of the state.

A FISHERMAN'S PRAYER

I hope that I may live to fish
Until my dying day,
And when it comes to my last cast
I then most humbly pray:

When in the Lord's great landing net
And peacefully asleep,
That in his mercy I be judged
Big enough to keep!

—by Tex Mobley,
Missoula, Montana

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